

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-01 SAM-01 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 USSS-00 OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-07 OC-05 CCO-00

TRSE-00 /104 W

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O R 101040Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9976

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4140

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION 10 MAY 1976: CHRISTIAN OFFENSIVE IN
MOUNTAINS THREATENS NEW-BORN LEBANESE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

REF:BEIRUT 4118

1. LEBANESE SITUATION OF 10 MAY FOLLOWING WELL-WORN PATTERN OF CHRISTIAN OFFENSIVE, LEFTIST RESPONSE AND CHRISTIAN COMPLAINT. CHRISTIAN OFFENSIVE IN MOUNTAINOUS METN AREA BROUGHT IN ANOTHER SLEEPLESS NIGHT IN SEVERAL AREAS OF BEIRUT AS LEFTIST GUN EMPLACEMENTS WENT INTO ACTION AFTER A DAY OF CALM. ON THE TRADITIONAL ALEY-KAHABLE AXIS, INCENDIARY PROJECTILES 9 MAY DESTROYED THE JOINT CHRISTIAN-DRUZE VILLAGE OF KOMATIEH.

2. IN THE METN, CHRISTIAN FORCES HAVE ADVANCED BUT REPORTS CONFLICT AS TO WHICH, IF ANY, VILLAGES RETAKEN. THIS OFFENSIVE AFTER ELECTION IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AS IT SOLIDIFIES ALL CENTRIFUGAL FORCES AT TIME WHEN POLITICAL PROCESS SHOULD BE TAKING OVER. CHRISTIANS MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO "CREATE FACTS" BY REGAINING CONTROL OF THEIR TRADITIONAL AREAS BEFORE POLITICAL COMPROMISE HINDERS THEM--BUT THEIR ACTIVITY IS VERY RISKY FOR POLITICAL PROCESS AND FLEDGLING REGIME OF SARKIS. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED OVER A PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION COMMUNIQUE SAYING IT MUST SUPPORT LEFTISTS IN THE METN IN ACCORD WITH THE SYRIAN AGREEMENT. THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS POTENTIAL OF DRAGGING FATAH, HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY, MORE COMPLETELY INTO LEFTIST CAMP AT TIME WHEN FATAH IS ATTEMPTING REMAIN ALOOF. CHRISTIANS--IN SOMEWHAT HYSTERICAL TONES--NOW CALLING FATAH. METN REINFORCEMENTS A PREPARATION FOR A NEW LEFTIST ATTACK. EMBASSY WAS ASSURED BY SELIM EL-KHOURY, POLITICIAN CLOSE TO FRANJIH, THAT CEASEFIRE WAS CALLED IN METN AROUND MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT. LATER REPORTING INDICATES CEASEFIRE--IF IT EXISTED--IS NOT HOLDING. CONTINUING CHRISTIAN MILITARY PRESSURE IN THE METN THREATENS NOT ONLY TO EXPAND FIGHTING ONCE AGAIN BUT TO GET JUMBLATT OUT OF THE ISOLATED POSITION HE OCCUPIES IN THE WAKE OF 8 MAY ELECTION.

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3. INRELATED DEVELOPMENT, THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF FURTHER SYRIAN TROOP ENTRY, POSSIBLY OF BATTALION SIZE, INTO LEBANON. WE UNDERSTAND THERE ARE ALSO SOME MOVES AFOOT BY SYRIAN BACKED ELEMENTS ALREADY IN LEBANON TO BRING ABOUT CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN METN AREA.

4. THE POLITICAL SCENE IS MORE CHEERFUL. PRESIDENT-ELECT ELIAS SARKIS MET WITH VARIETY OF POLITICAL LEADERS YESTERDAY IN HIS

CARLTON HOTEL STRONGHOLD. AMBASSADOR BROWN ALSO RECEIVED BY SARKIS LAST NIGHT AT REQUEST OF SARKIS. SARKIS PLANS VISIT FRANJIEH IN JUNIEH EITHER 11 OR 12 MAY. YESTERDAY HE THANKED OPPOSITION CANDIDATE RAYMOND EDDE FOR HIS CONCILIATORY STATEMENT FOLLOWING ELECTION. SARKIS ALSO IN CONTACT WITH YASIR ARAFAT, WHO HAS PRESENTED CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT-ELECT. SARKIS SAYS HE WISHES MEET WITH KAMAL JUMBLATT IN A SPIRIT OF UNITY. BUT JUMBLATT REMAINS UNAPPEASED AND WAS LAST HEARD FROM RAMPAGING AT LEFTIST MEETING ON 9 MAY WHERE HE IS SAID TO HAVE "ATTACKED ALL ARAB REGIMES WITHOUT EXCEPTION FOR PLOTTING AGAINST LEBANON." BROWN

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